The Newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of Gay Community Social Services

NORTH Bi NORTHWEST

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1993 VOLUME 6, NUMBER 1

PERSPECTIVES ON SBWN STRUGGLES

by Del C.

I'd like to clarify that what follows is just my opinion. That's all.

I'm new to Seattle and to SBWN but not to bisexuality. I'm so pleased to be part of a group of women who share their greatly diverse resources for the common good of queerness and feminism. I'm learning about the enrichments and frustrations of being in a group and I must remark that the women of SBWN are respectfully attempting and quite successfully finding the answers to many everlasting questions of humanity: How to get along?; How to get from A to B?; Who's to sow?; Who's to reap?; and How to achieve an inclusive constitution?: I am thankful to the women whose collective energies have produced a safe space, structure, policies and funds that made it possible for me to walk into an organization that has so much to offer. I am finding rewards through my association with SBWN that other aspects of my life no longer satisfy: support, friendship, sisterhood, political outlets, inspiration, role models, appreciation, and meaning. I'm thrilled for other women yet to come to SBWN who will appreciate this growth experience as I have.

Considering my recent involvement and multiple interests in SBWN, I'd like to offer my insight into the "us against them" issues and attitudes that arose in and out of the Monday Night/Newcomer's group meeting in hopes of inducing thought and a clearer perspective.

The operational needs of the support group must be recognized. The distinction between the Political and Operational arms must be realized. And the combined interests of the Political, operational and Support functions must be respected. SBWN is a non-profit, donation-funded ;volunteer-dependent Feminist organization. To be a SBWN volunteer takes no specialties, just interest and enthusiasm and a commitment to the desire that SBWN continues and perhaps even flourishes. An accommodating individual aware of the greater good can be a woman just now self actualizing or a high profile, politically accomplished woman.

The Monday January 11th meeting started out in limbo with many unexpected conditions. It did start with the help of another quick-thinking facilitator. Adding to the confusion, the usual format had been changed without prior notice. It was also the

(Continued on page 10)

THE INVASION OF THE CC ON MONDAY NIGHT

by Susan Alyx Reynolds

It was a cold, blistering eve, January 11, 1993 — all was fairly normal. The Monday night SBWN Newcomer's Group was to proceed as scheduled. Everything was normal except the CC was to have their presence felt by the Newcomer's Group. This was following some discussions over the communication gaps and rifts between the interconnection and intra-relationship of the Newcomer's Group and SBWN as a whole, regarding the holidays and an article in the previous edition of *North Bi Northwest*.

The CC (the Coordinating Committee of Seattle Bisexual Women's Network), wanted to clear the air and make everyone aware that the CC is not an omnipotent governing body, but rather a collective of women volunteering their time and energy, etc. The CC coordinates the usual mundane tasks of ensuring that SBWN the Newsletter, the regular and Monday night groups continually function, as well as other events.

The focus was shifted by persons respectfully voicing their strong attachments to the Newcomer's group and also their wishes for its continuance. Overall, it seemed all involved wanted basically the same things, but were unsure of how the energies of each individual involved would be directed.

Being the Newcomer's /Rap/Monday Group coordinator, I want the needs of all the people attending the Monday meetings to be met. To do so successfully seems a monumental task. When I was voted into this position, I had no idea the chores of it was to distance me from the concerns and needs of the persons within the group. I agreed to take on the title only because my goal was for the newcomers to the Seattle area, women newly exploring their sexuality, and women dealing with coming out to all have one safe space to discuss their issues. I also want the space to have the feeling of openness and safety for women perhaps not new to anything who just want to come and rap and /or socialize. How does one group fulfill all those needs? Can one group fulfill all those different needs? I don't have the answers or all the plausible solutions, and neither does the CC. The only solution I have is for a continual flow of communication between the groups. After all we are all one group - Women of SBWN.

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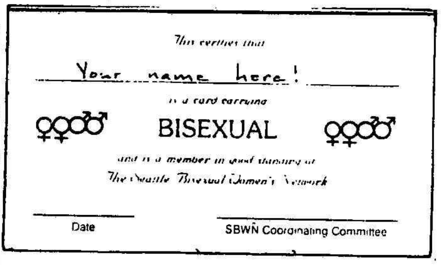
SBWN Statement of Purpose

We are a group of feminists working to create a bisexual support network and to promote equality for bisexual people in both the heterosexual and lesbian/gay communities. We regard ourselves as part of the larger sexual minority community, and consider the fight for lesbian/gay rights to be our own. We are dedicated to the right of all people to define their own sexuality, free from any social, political or economic coercion. We seek to provide a safe place for women to explore all aspects of their sexuality. All women are welcome to attend SBWN activities. While we work with men on issues of common interest, our group is exclusively female to keep the concerns of women in the forefront of our work.

The discrimination we face as women and as sexual minorities is only one facet of oppression: all bigotry is our enemy. We stand behind the racial and ethnic liberation movements and the struggle for economic equality. However, in any work we do, feminism and the interests of women will be our central concern.

Seattle Bisexual Women's Network,
P.O. Box 30645; Greenwood Station
Seattle, WA 98103-0645, (206) 783-7987.

Join the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network and become a card-carrying bisexual!



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The Seattle Bisexual Women's Network

Date

SBWN Coordinating Committee

☐ $12 quarterly membership.

☐ $25 Bi-Lover quarterly membership

☐ $100 Bi-Goddess membership

☐ I don't easily fit into a category $___

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MEETING NOTES

WOMEN READING WOMEN

by Peggy Walsh

The introductory meeting of SBWN's feminist reading group was a resounding success! Twenty-five women got together on a Sunday evening to explore commonalities and differences in literary interests. For the most part we were strangers to one another, and seemed to follow the curve of probability in sexuality: mostly bisexuals, with a few lesbians and heterosexuals (though we didn't ask).

At first we introduced ourselves, starting with what our goals were in coming to the group. There were a number of common themes in the sorts of works we hoped to explore: women's spirituality, works by minority women, lesbian and bi fiction, politics/anarchy, mysteries, catching up on the classics, biography/journals, erotica, women in film and other media. More personal goals were to meet interesting women from whom to learn and be challenged, and with whom to find community. My own ulterior motives include the possibility of finding a job lead or a fellow adventurer with whom to explore.

We ended up forming five groups, studying the following books: *Closer to Home* by Beth Weise; *Backlash* by Susan Faludi; Audre Lorde's *Our Dead Behind Us*; *Aesthetics of Feminism* (feminist criticism); and *Toward the Anthropology of Women*. These are flexible, ongoing groups. We expect to re-form as projects end and new ones start, with people moving from one collection to another. Women may join on an ongoing basis. For information on meeting times leave a message on the Biphone at 783-7987. Preliminary plans for a summer-time picnic potluck follow-up at Gas Works Park are under discussion.▼

Free exhibit: The AIDS Memorial Scrapbook will be on display at Phinney Neighborhood Center on Saturday, February 13 from 10am to 6pm. The address is 6532 Phinney N. in Seattle..▼

From the EDITORS

Well, we got some submissions this month! This issue is a little weighted toward one subject - that being our group- and we apologize to those who are removed from it either literally or figuratively and may not have interest in this subject. We do feel, however, that the difficulties SBWN has experienced may address some universal questions. This is at any rate a very important subject to many of our readers, and we wish to thank those who contributed, many of them first time writers for *North Bi Northwest*. We encourage further submissions from them and others, on this or any subject; our deadline for the next issue is March 1.

We also wish to thank: Del C. for her diligent work on advertising, Lizabeth for last minute writing, ben for computer help, and Peggy for all the little and not-so-little things, as usual. Since Dawn is moving on to bigger and better things by way of San Francisco come April, we are especially looking for those interested in working on the newsletter, and particularly those with access to computers!

Hope your Valentine's Day is Visible, and see you in DC in April!

-Erica and Dawn

HOT DAM!
women, sex, and latex...

The Northwest AIDS Foundation and Smart Women will be offering the next HOT DAM! women, sex, and latex... workshop on Saturday, February 6, 1993, from 10am to 4pm at the Northwest AIDS Foundation, located at 127 Broadway East.

This workshop is designed to offer Lesbians and Bisexual women a chance to talk about safer sex, sexuality, and the reality of HIV/AIDS in our communities. Workshop participants will have the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of HIV disease manifestations specific to women and increased knowledge as to why Lesbians and Bisexual women have been invisible in this epidemic. Participants will develop skills in communicating sexual safety concerns with a partner, will have the opportunity to find out what other women are doing for themselves around sexual safety, and will have "hands on" experiences in eroticizing safer sex. A brief lunch break will be included.

HOT DAM! workshops will be held quarterly and are limited to 50 participants. Childcare and American Sign Language is provided upon request. To register, please call the Northwest AIDS Foundation's Information & Referral Line at 329-6923, ext. 241. TDD, 323-2685.▼

GCSS ANNUAL MEETING

by Lizabeth

The Gay Community Social Services Annual Meeting for 1993 was held January 16th, at Chicken Soup Brigade. About twenty people attended, most representing their project. SBWN had the highest turnout, with six members. Yes, we are great!

There were eight projects represented: SBWN, Transsexual Lesbians and Friends, RFD, Friends of ACT-UP, Friends of March on Washington, Heart to Art, Stonewall Youth, and the Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Snohomish County.

Highlightswere: Faygela's brownies.

The twenty year history of GCSS.

The removal of three projects: Moondance, Lavender Panthers, ALY.

The by-law revisions make it easier to become a project representative, and allow more non-project people to be on the board.

GCSS holds board meetings on the third Tuesday of every month (except January) at the Heart to Art space. The project reps are required to attend the quarterly meetings, ie April, July, and October. If you are interested in seeing what GCSS does, or in becoming involved on the board, call the biphone at 783-7987 or GCSS at 292-5144.▼

NEWS

MOMS with Adolescent Sons- Lesbian mom is gathering material for an anthology about your experiences with raising adolescent sons. Send stories, pictures, poems, audio tapes, etc. (and a SASE if you want them back) to:

Leah Mousaioff
2836 S Dakota
Seattle, WA 98108
(206) 723-2089▼

ALYSON PUBLICATIONS would like to do a new "edition" of One Teenager in Ten. They're looking for short stories from bisexuals, gays, or lesbians aged nineteen or under. If you're interested in contributing send submissions (and a return address) to:

Ann Heron
c/o Alyson Publications
40 Plympton St.
Boston, MA 02118▼

WOMEN'S STRIKE DAY

We received several phone calls in response to the article in the Nov/Dec issue of the News and Calendar regarding a National Women's Strike Day. The author of the article, Nicky Marone, has a loose coalition of representaives around the country helping to make the strike happen. In her original article, published in the New York Times, she proposes the date to be August 26th, 1993. Organizations representing teachers phoned requesting the date be changed to a time when school is in session so they too could participate. Subsequently, the date has been changed to October 24, 1993, the anniversary of the first women's strike in US history. If you would like more information on the strike or want to get involved, call Barbara Dreyfuss-Briggs in Seattle at 820-2754.

-Reprinted from the University of Washington Women's Information Center bulletin.▼

LIVING WITH THE ENEMY

In February, New Beginnings Shelter for Battered Women and Their Children presents Living With the Enemy, a photographic exhibition of domestic violence by internationally known documentary photographer Donna Ferrato. This stark and powerful visual chronicle reveals the truth behind the jargon and euphemisms 'spouse abuse', 'lover's quarrel' or even 'domestic violence'. This exhibit is free to the public, February 1-27, in the lobby of 1001 Fourth Avenue Plaza building in Seattle. Hours are Monday through Friday 7am to 6pm, and Saturday 8am to 4pm. The photos in the exhibit are from Ferrato's book *Living with the Enemy*, published by Aperture Press. The images and captions culled from years of interviews and observations are a testimony to the courage of battered women as they work to regain control of their lives and at the same time show us how much further we need to go to support their attempts to reach safety. Also on display will be art work and personal stories created by children who have stayed at New Beginnings Shelter in the past.

Domestic violence is a crime that kills people and destroys the integrity of our community, and is the most common and under-reported crime in the country. It is the single greatest cause of female homicide and of injury to women requiring medical treatment; more than auto accidents, rapes and muggings combined. Nationwide, of women killed in domestic violence homicides, 75% occur after the woman has left the relationship, which strongly refutes the myth that if it were so bad, women would leave.

For more information on the show or previews (February 9 and 10), phone New Beginnings at 206-783-4520. For counseling or shelter, call 522-9472▼

SUBMISSIONS SOUGHT: Bisexual Anthology-fiction, non-fiction, poetry, cartoons or any creation related to bisexuality. Contact:

Sheela Lambert
720 W 173rd St.
New York, NY (212) 928-3558▼

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS for an anthology of writing and artwork by Asian Pacific Islander Lesbians and Bisexual Women to be published by Sister Vision: Black Women and Women of Colour Press.

About sexuality, activism, racism, homophobia, relationships, immigration, identity, erotica, disability, biculturalism, family issues, art- in short, our lives. Send fiction, poetry, essays, interviews, short plays, autobiography, journal entries, photographs, prints, drawings, photos of sculpture or paintings.

The deadline is March 30, 1993. Send submissions with a SASE. Please write if you have special needs or questions.

Sister Vision Press
PO Box 217, Station E
Toronto, Ontario M6H 4E2▼

The INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY of Bisexual Groups (9th edition) is home from the printer, and avaiable for sale. This edition is 52 pages and includes groups in four new countries.

Looking for a group in your area, or just curious to see what's out there? To order a copy, send a check for $5 (in US dollars) payable to ECBN to:

East Coast Bisexual Network
PO Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140▼

DO YOU FEEL... Controlled, Trapped, Isolated, Intimidated, Exhausted...If you think you are being abused by and intimate partner, you are not alone.

Domestic violence is any pattern of behavior used to coerce, dominate or isolate. It is the exertion of any form of power that is used to maintain control within a relationship. A lesbian can be battered or abused by a lover, ex-lover, former spouse, roommate or family member.

Advocates for Abused & Battered Lesbians (AABL) offers the following services: safety planning, peer support group, legal advocacy, safe housing referrals, counseling & health care referrals, and community education. For more information call (TDD/Voice Message) (206) 547-8191▼

NEWS

MARCH ON WASHINGTON

S/M-LEATHER-FETISH people from around the country will converge on Washington, DC on April 25, 1993, and join with hundreds of thousands of our gay, lesbian, bisexual, and straight brothers and sisters. We'll demand our rights, celebrate our diversity, raise a little hell, show our strength, and have a ball!

The focus of the march, supported by a broad spectrum of the lesbian and gay community, includes the repeal of anti-sodomy laws and all laws restricting private sexual expression between consenting adults, passage of a Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Bill, a genuine national commitment to the fight against AIDS, the right to control our own bodies, an end to attempts to censor images of gays and lesbians, and the call for an executive order banning anti-gay discrimination in the government, including in the military.

In addition to the march and the conference being planned by our contingent, there will be other events in Washington you might want to participate in. These include several days of pre-march lobbying, carefully organized civil disobedience, a display of the AIDS memorial quilt, and many other related events. For information (including child care), call 800/832-2889; for lobbying info, call Shannon at 202/332-6483.

Now is the time to begin campaigning to get people to DC. The s/m-leather-fetish contingent was an enormous success in 1987, and the organizing effort for that march helped fuel the growth of groups around the country. Plan to be there yourself; meet with others in your area to coordinate outreach, fundraising, and transportation; make sure your group turns out in force. march with the s/m-leather-fetish contingent!

For more information contact: S/M-LEATHER CONTINGENT - SMLC, PO Box 965, South San Francisco, CA 94083-0965▼

Remember the last time you searched for toys or gifts that featured two mommies or two daddies and couldn't find any? Not any more!

We started Rainbow Families when we realized that our sons, Noam and Tom, did not have any toys they could relate to - toys that would make them proud of being part of a Rainbow family. All of our friends felt that way, too, and wanted the same for their kids.

We had fun thinking up and creating our products. We hope you and your children will have as much fun playing with them, reading them, and using them, as our family does.

We'd love to hear from you. If you have any questions, suggestions for new products or any other comments - just write to us and we'll answer all of your requests promptly.

For more information or a catalog contact: Rainbow Families PO Box 11265 Takoma Park, MD 20913▼

Thousands of bisexuals and bi-friendly people will be in Washington DC the weekend of April 23-25 for the 1993 National March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay , Bisexual and Transgender Equal Rights and Liberation and other events. The National Conference Celebrating Bisexuality and the Bi Celebration will also be held Saturday April 24 1993. Get your registration forms and more information at Bi events or meetings. Or write to: East Coast Bisexual Network/Conference, PO Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140. Planning ahead is cheaper and easier.▼

The Seattle Gay Clinic is now offering free anonymous testing for HIV, Hepatitis B, and other STDs. The clinic is aharing space with the Country Dr. and is located at 500 19th Ave E. on Capitol Hill. Please call (206) 461-4540 for more information.▼

Overlooked Opinions, Inc., Chicago, the national opinion polling firm dedicated to the lesbigay community, proudly announces COMMUNITYSPIRIT, the first national long distance calling program designed for lesbian and gay America.

With COMMUNITYSPIRIT there are no special fees, no switching charges, no additional bills to pay (most areas), no minimums, no restrictive calling circles, and a free calling card. Most importantly, with COMMUNITYSPIRIT, two percent of all long distance calling charges are donated to the gay lesbian or bisexual organizations of the customer's choice.

According to Jeff Vitale, president of Overlooked Opinions, Inc., "COMMUNITYSPIRIT was created as a program to provide additional funding for the many gay and lesbian groups that serve our community all across thecountry. In addition, because of our buying power, we are able to offer a savings potential of up to 25% when compared to AT&T, MCI or Sprint."

Overlooked Opinions projects a first-year enrollment of 100,000, with a goal of 1 million over the next five years. If all goes according to plans, COMMUNITYSPIRIT will generate over $11.5 million dollars a year in additional funding for gay lesbian, bisexual and AIDS groups across the country.

Persons interested in switching their long distance service to COMMUNITYSPIRIT can call (800) It's-Ours, 24 hours a day.

Lesbigay organizations interested in fund-raising opportunities should contact Joe Bartelli at (800) 800-9650. No group is too small to benefit. Groups must either be 501(c)3, or have an affiliated 501(c)3 arm that can accept donations. COMMUNITYSPIRIT brochures and post-cards are available in quantity to anyone who wants to help spread the word. Those interested should call the toll-free number above and ask for Kelly Zimmermann.▼

OPINION

READER RESPONDS TO PERSONAL/POLITICAL

I read "The Personal and the Political" in the Dec/Jan issue and I would like to respond with my point of view. I am a queer-identified bisexual woman who would go to a BI-feminist group to escape heterosexual AND homosexual oppression and hang-ups.

I also believe that ideally labels for sexual orientation would not be necessary; that we are all just sexual beings. That being true, I would draw the continuum with 'sexual' (that is, what we today call bisexual) at one end and 'asexual' (that is, not at all sexual) at the other with monosexual (homosexual, lesbian or heterosexual) somewhere in the middle. I use the label bisexual for myself and I see myself as a "true bisexual," to borrow your phrase, but I don't see myself falling in the middle of anything.

You write, "it seems to me that this fissure leads women to identify with one side or the other, and encourages division and uneasiness in our group." Later, "There are snide comments about the aforementioned 'housewives in Bellevue,' or about long hair and makeup." In another paragraph, "...the reluctance of new people to come in and try to change things. We have respect for these older and more experienced women that is well-deserved, and the fact that they are often older in years can add to intimidation."

Prejudice, intolerance and bigotry add to intimidation. The comments about hair style, use of makeup, place of residence, or level of feminist commitment are evidence of these negative attitudes within SBWN. SBWN's policies regarding transsexuals also reflect these attitudes. It is this rumor of such intolerance that has kept me, personally, away from SBWN. When I seek bi space, I don't want to have to deal with different instances of 'bigotry" like snide comments about where someone lives or how they style their hair.

Compassion? "Women who have accepted and embraced their sexuality are frankly not interested in retreading the same old 'when did you first realize you were bi' that is so valuable to newcomers." I would have respect for women who are willing to share their thoughts and experiences and to listen; I have no respect for women who have forgotten the fear and pain that a sexuality crisis can cause. Why would I want to associate with women who seem so compassionless?

And so what if a housewife from Bellevue attends some meetings and learns about herself and others? And so what if that woman decides in the end that she is predominantly heterosexual? Hopefully the woman will walk away from the group with the topic of sexuality a little less perplexing, less scary. Hopefully she will walk away 'on our side' - in support of orientations other than hetero. Isn't education the key factor in total acceptance of bi's and gay's? The Statement of Purpose says "We seek to provide a safe place for women to explore all aspects of their sexuality." Unfortunately, the meetings do not seem to be a safe place for women who are exploring their sexuality. Unfortunately, some walk away from the group with a bad opinion about SBWN and how it treats people.

"People do not become involved in organizations unless they feel welcome, wanted and valued."

It may be less daunting for a woman with a sexuality/orientation crisis to go to a bi group rather than a lesbian group, but it is daunting, none the less. And it may be that some women begin their path of discovery as a bisexual and then begin to see themselves as a lesbian. So what? The myth about bisexuals being fence-sitters has been around for a long time; we who identify as bisexuals know that this is simply not true. In my opinion, fence-sitting is a monosexual issue, not a bisexual one; monosexuals sit on the mythical bi fence before they make their final leap. Myths aside, SBWN is supposed to be open to women who are exploring their sexuality, or so the Statement of Purpose says.

"The women in the group who are exploring bisexuality from the lesbian 'side' fall right into the "regular" group, having very little in common with the mostly straight-identified newcomers." I suppose there is no such thing as a lesbian gradually coming to the shocking realization that she might like to kiss the boy behind the latte counter; I suppose she would never sit and have someone listen to her deny a hetero identity and agonize over whether she should mention "it" to her girlfriend.

Is this division within SBWN one of "newly bisexual" and "longtime bisexual?" Or is it yet another straight/gay division?

There are some women who do not participate in organized group politics; they may be political in their own way, or have different political goals than SBWN. Some women are not political at all. Lack of political involvement does not exclude women from exploring sexuality, being bisexual, and/or seeking safe bi woman space. There are other women, like me, out and secure in their sexual identity who feel no need to be supported in a support group, but who crave the company of other bi women. Maybe a single group with a decidedly feminist/political focus can not meet the needs of the diverse bi women's community. Perhaps six years ago, the women of SBWN had fewer needs, or its fewer members had common needs. Maybe the needs of its members/potential members have changed but SBWN hasn't.

I have thought about attending meetings and trying to be an instrument of change, but one main reason stops me: much of the time I hold a minority opinion in groups in my day-to-day life. Rarely do 'fag' jokes, misogynist comments, racist statements fall on my ears that I don't inform the offending party of the inappropriateness of their remarks. That ranges from a distasteful stare to an out-and-out shouting match. My intolerance of hatred makes me a less-than-popular individual in some circles. This doesn't bother me because I try to live by my beliefs. So when I choose to be part of a group, I choose groups whose basic attitudes are close to my own in practice.

(Continued on page 7)

READER RESPONSE...

(Continued from page 6)

The article acknowledges that outside of a core group SBWN women do not get involved in SBWN and that the group lacks cohesion. People do not become involved in organizations unless they feel welcome, wanted, and valued. Regardless of the form SBWN takes, the intolerance within the group, the pressuring of women in the group by others in the group needs to change. Such behavior does NOT unify women. It does NOT encourage organizations to grow. How can we expect tolerance and acceptance from the monosexual communities when we can't even tolerate and accept the diversity among ourselves?

SBWN is a pioneer group within the bisexual community. I sincerely hope that the group's problems work out. I do not mean for my words to devalue SBWN; I only mean for them to present a point of view from a potential active member. I appreciate the existence of the group; I applaud its founders and the women who have been its core for keeping the group alive. It does take attention and energy that these women could be spending on other interests. I believe the newsletter is a wonderful resource for the bisexual community in general, not just to those in the Great Northwest.

"Who is she?", you might be asking. I'm a bisexual feminist living on the dreaded Eastside. I have short, partially shaved hair that I will no doubt eventually grow long only to cut it off again, something I like to do. Depending on when and where you see me, I might be wearing contact lenses or wire framed glasses. I might be wearing a T-shirt and work boots. maybe along lace skirt or leather mini. maybe 10-year-old, paint-covered brown overalls. Sometimes I even wear makeup. Usually none. I enjoy being diverse within myself. I celebrate the freedom I have to be myself. I try to encourage others to do the same.

-Pat Cattolico
Washington▼

DEAR NEWCOMERS

by Lizabeth

I have been involved in SBWN for over three years. In that time I have seen change in the group, from the start of the Newcomers Group, to turnover in the women involved with the running of the Network, and in who attends meetings.

I have taken responsibility for the mailing lists, and have done numerous other things, such as answered our phone in person, run business meetings, and facilitated topic meetings. I am one of "those old timers" who is part of the Coordinating Committee (CC), helping to keep SBWN running.

The division I'm hearing about between the Newcomer's group and the CC is distressing. I was unable to attend the meeting on January 11, and I have heard several different versions of what happened. The biggest issue seems to be the idea that the Newcomer's want to function as a separate group from SBWN. This idea makes me angry.

SBWN is an organization. Let's look at what this organization does:

Phone - Put out a monthly calendar of events, receive calls from women looking for support, information. Return calls. Answer calls 'live', at least once a month.

PO Box - receive requests for information, subscriptions, newsletters. Receive newsletters from around the world. Someone collects this mail, which brings us to:

Correspondence - people requesting information, help, support, money. This is answered in a timely order.

Newsletter - put out bi-monthly; This newsletter is published by SBWN, and we carry the printing and mailing costs. These include envelopes, labels, and postage. The newsletter is not entirely covered by subscriptions; we trade with other Bisexual organizations around the world, and we send out newsletters to other organizations for information purposes.

GCSS - SBWN is a member project of Gay Community Social Services, for which we get our tax-exempt status. Our responsibility back to GCSS is to attend monthly meetings, and to produce quarterly financial reports.

And finally, **hold meetings** - a minimum of four a month. SBWN pays rent on the space, and must schedule our time requirements with the owner of the space. SBWN is also responsible for opening and closing up. We have to make sure a facilitator attends, who tries to make everyone feel welcome, and to keep everyone on track. SBWN has held special training for women who are interested in facilitating. Most of these things have a cost. For the 4th quarter of 1992 alone:

Expenses of SBWN	$717.49
Income	$515.69
Difference	-$201.80

As you can see, we are now at least $200 in debt. The total volunteer effort behind all the work listed above, for 3 months, was 237 hours. At $5/hour, this is $1185.00. But we're talking skilled labor, to put the newsletter together, and to facilitate meetings. Could we find talented, skilled people to do this work, for $5/hour? No. But we have found talented, skilled people who are willing to give their time, for free.

For everyone who says she can run things on her own, then do it. It's a lot of work, a lot of time, and there seems to be NO appreciation for it.

For everyone who says she doesn't have time to put in but here's some money, think about being required to pay dues. If SBWN hired out the work listed above, we would have to charge dues of at least $10 per meeting (per person!), or $50 per month.

And, look at what I didn't list: outreach through BiOut, the speaker's bureau. Informal get-togethers, like after meetings. A phone tree, to get information out to others quickly. Working a table at events, to get information about SBWN out to more women.

Yes, not every organization does all that SBWN does. What would you be willing to give up? What function has no place in your life, and what are you willing to take away from other women? What do you want from SBWN?

I am angry that people feel they can do a better job, yet refuse to step up and try. If you want to change things, join in. Afraid that just one person can't do it? Bring a friend. Bring two. There is always room for more.▼

Support groups, **housing file,** *fiction,* **non-fiction,** ***magazines,*** newspapers, *emergency referrals,* **service referrals - accountants, attorneys, carpenters, chiropractors, dentists, lawncare, plumbers, therapists - dances,** coming out groups, safe sex kits, **a place to hang out...**

All at the **Lesbian Resource Center**

1208 E. Pine
Seattle, WA 98122
206/322-3953

"I was just going to stay home and watch the Brady Bunch marathon on Nick at Night, but then I picked up my copy of the *LRC Community News* and it said there was a great band playing. That was so much fun. And while I was reading I saw that there was this softball tournament this weekend so I'm definitely going to watch that. And I saw that there's a rap group this Wednesday night. And I saw an ad for a mechanic so I think I'll finally get my car fixed...."

LRC Community News.
$12 a year by mail or available from newsstands, bookstores and bars all around town.

1208 E. Pine
Seattle, WA 98122
206/322-3953

BINET SEATTLE: IDEAS

by Lizabeth

Below is a working version of the statement of purpose for BiNet/Seattle. I would like to put this out as a possible, not given, set of purposes. I took input from the early BiNet/Seattle meetings, the SBWN Statement (on the inside cover of this newsletter), and other things I have read over the last six months.

First, BiNet USA's statement:

"The BiNet USA's purpose is the collection and distribution of information regarding Bisexuality to facilitate the development of Bisexual community and visibility.

To work for the equal rights and liberation of Bisexuals and all oppressed people, and to work to eradicate all forms of oppression, inside, as well as outside the Bisexual community."

What I'm offering up for BiNet/Seattle:

"We are a group of urban, out, bisexuals, working to create a mixed-gender bisexual community network. We advocate recognition and inclusion for bisexual people in both the lesbian and gay communities and the heterosexual communities.

We strongly believe in the right of all people to define and express their own sexuality, free from any social, cultural, political, or economic coercion.

We hold that bisexuality is a positive and valid form of human sexuality; that bisexual people have the right to form and develop the type of relationship/s of their choice; and that these relationships are valid and deserve respect.

We are working to dispel the common and uncommon myths about bisexuals, and to make the world aware that bisexuals are everywhere.

Within BiNet/Seattle, we will specifically work on issues of political interest, including civil rights, hate crimes, and discrimination in the work place, in housing, and in health care.

Through BiOut, the speaker's bureau, we will strive to educate people beyond our group. Our goal is visibility.

And finally, we will have BIG FUN, to bring the Seattle bisexual community together, for social and support purposes. The families, partners, and friends of bisexual people are as important to us as for others, and are included and welcomed in our community.

I want input: Is this on track? Did I leave anything or anyone out? Too strong, too weak?

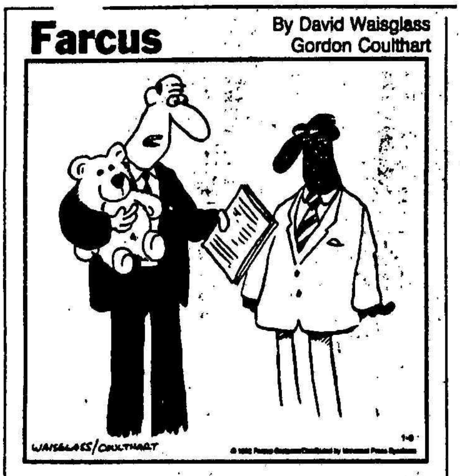
Write to BiNet/Seattle, PO Box 30645 Greenwood, Seattle, WA 98103-0645 or come to a meeting.▼

In celebration of Black History month, we would like to update you on "Keepin' On"

"Keepin' On" is a portable exhibit of images of African American Lesbians from the Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA) that first opened in February 1991. Primarily comprised of photographs, the exhibit portrays the pride and survival of African American Lesbians from the early 1900's to the present. The title comes from Mabel Hampton, an early supporter of the LHA who challenged them to "Keep on keepin' on."

The exhibit was first shown in 1991 at the Lesbian and Gay Community Center in New York City and was co-sponsored by the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center and the National Museum of Lesbian and Gay History. Since then, it has enjoyed showings in Atlanta and several other cities around the nation.

The diversity of images represents the diversity of experiences that these women have had, while at the same time trying to expose the common bonds; indeed, to document that "there has always been more to our lives than oppression" according to Joan Nestle, educator and author. This moving collection of posters, letters, tickets, clippings, etc. was coordinated by Morgan Gwenwald and curated by Morgan, Paula Grant and Georgia Brooks. Among the contributers to the exhibit are: poet and author, Audre Lorde, Storme DeLarverie, JEB, Tee Corinne, Jewelle Gomez, Frances Taylor and Marjorie Hill..▼



"They liked my proposal, but suggested I leave Teddy at home."

NEW YEAR'S PARTY

by Peggy Walsh

At the end of the BiNet family Solstice party on December 19, a number of us discovered that we all had plans to do 'nothing' on New Year's Eve. We decided that if we all got together to do 'nothing,' it would be like doing 'something,' so we planned a party and started phone calls going out. On the evening of the 31st, Fuzzy Wuzzy (my bear the family got before they got me 47 years ago) and my black panther baby went to Lizabeth's to party with a couple dozen other people and creatures.

The first few hours were spent hanging out, talking, snacking, baking cookies. We acknowledged midnight with a toast, and for some, a trot up the block to where we could see the Space Needle's light show and the neighbors' fireworks. The others thought we were nuts for being out in the cold clear night in bare feet and nighties. It was beautiful!

Then we gathered in the living room, dressed in our flannel pajamas and bathrobes, settling in for story time. My creatures met Lizabeth's long-ago Christmas bear, ben's Ursonius Monk (a jazz-loving bear), Elizabeth's faceless Amish doll (avoiding graven images), and Drew's Seattle Center bear. We heard a variety of readings; e.e. cummings, two poems Erica had written the day before, a hilarious dinner party story from *Ladies' Home Erotica*, a just-received HOT story from Iowa destined for *North Bi Northwest*, and more. Happy New Year! And may you always have something interesting to read!.▼

BINET TO HOLD REGIONAL CONFERENCE

by ben

The Seattle affiliates of BiNet USA will host the organization's first Northwest Regional Conference on February 12-14, 1993, at Pilgrim Congregational Church, Broadway and Republican. The Conference will finish off with an afternoon's worth of local events for BiNet USA's Second Annual Bisexual Visibility Day.

The Northwest Conference will start with a Friday evening reception for out-of-town participants, where they can meet up with the organizers, volunteers, and their hosts providing housing.

Saturday morning and afternoon there will be workshops including: "Defeating Anti-Queer Initiatives," "Bisexuals Come in All Colors," "Hot Bi Safe Sex," "Putting Out the Bi Word: Newsletter Publication," "Speak Out: A Bi Speakers Training," "Bisexualities and Spiritualities" and others. Workshop times are not yet set.

Election of two Regional Delegates will also occur Saturday afternoon; nominations are still open.

A community dinner and dance party will be held Saturday evening for conference participants and the Bi and Bi-positive community at large.

Sunday's Bisexual Visibility Day events will start with a Kiss-In at noon in front of Pilgrim Congregational Church, and will be followed by mobile Bi-Outings going to the Pike Place Market, various cafes, clubs, bookstores, a mall or two, etc....

The goals of the Conference are: to build connections among Bi people throughout the NW; to provide support and promote visibility; and to help people start Bi groups where there are none and strengthen those that are developing.

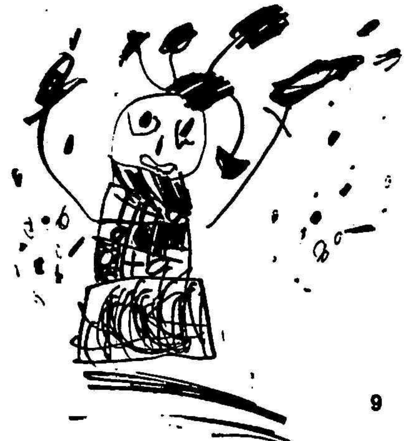
The goals of Bisexual Visibility Day are: to give support to the many Bisexual and other Queer people who feel crushed by the oppression of heterosexism and homophobia; to increase awareness, recognition and valuing of Bisexuality as one of the ways love is expressed; and to put bigots on notice that Bisexual people are working in cooperation with all other oppressed peoples to put an end to discrimination and hate born of ignorance and fear; and to help create equality and freedom for all.

Conference pre-registration is $25. Those not attending the conference may come to the dinner and/or dance separately; the dinner is $6 and requires an RSVP, and the dance is $5. All amounts are negotiable for low-income people. Childcare and other special provisions may be available if we receive notice of their need, and can provide for them. Bisexual Visibilty Day events are free so please come!

For registration information or to RSVP, call (206) 783-7987. Please register or RSVP by February 10. Checks can be sent to:

BiNet Seattle
2202 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98144.▼

This drawing was done by a 4-year old girl at the NB shelter. She said of it, 'I felt crazy before I came to the shelter.'



see story about New Beginnings Shelter on page 4

SBWN PERSPECTIVE...

(Continued from page 1)

first meeting after the holidays and many new faces were present, some who were making their first visit to the group, and others being CC (Coordinating Committee) members.

The CC representative for the Newcomer's group came in late and expressed her feeling of urgency to deliver her agenda; this escalated the concern and caused the intentions of the CC to be questioned. Women wondered if they were going to be oppressed by feminism itself, coerced into assuming responsibility or political activity and if the purpose and goals of the Newcomer's group would be respected. The representative meant to start the year off right and reinforce the harmony and self-perpetuation of the Newcomer's group. She wanted to say she was available and willing to convey information to the CC and to protect the interests of the Newcomer's group and to ask for help in taking the duties of communication more seriously. She also wanted to thank the women who had helped and volunteered, who proved the Newcomer's group would continue to thrive.

The CC visited this meeting in hopes of enabling accessibility and inclusiveness within the groups of SBWN. These women were curious and interested in who the women of the Newcomer's group were and what was going on in this support directed group, which was attractive to some CC members interested in involvement with the support aspect of SBWN.

I don't know if they found support for themselves or what they do in SBWN from the Newcomer's group. They don't want to be perceived as nameless, faceless, insensitive women. They are fellow bisexuals who actively volunteer to elected positions of responsibility for SBWN. They wanted to affirm that the women of the Newcomer's group are equals and considered valuable and capable, and to welcome these women to express themselves actively or passively in other aspects of SBWN.

SBWN is in need of volunteers and for it to survive as we know it the cycle must revolve. We all make a choice as to whether it ends or continues on. The newcomer's group by nature of its directives generates new resources for SBWN. I felt intimidated by the grandiose first impressions of this eclectic, energetic, active and empowered group of women but once I got a feel for the organization I felt confident in voluntarily expressing my interest and energy in many ways. The CC did not visit the Newcomer's group as superiors, recruiters, or the SBWN Police. I was present when the idea was presented and their intentions are commendable. Their actions were misinterpreted because of circumstance. Erica's provocative article in *North Bi Northwest* "The Personal and the Political" had been distributed and stirred up a lot of response and reaction. It was hard to distinguish between which comments were in reference to the article, or the CC's presence, and/or the unexpected change in meeting format.

Many concerns surfaced;those left unresolved will be brought up again at a regular meeting. A list of women interested in facilitator training was started and the question arose as to why we would pay for such a workshop if no one outside a select few would have a chance to use those skills in the group. It was agreed that Newcomer's group facilitation would be revolving and provided by peers and that the training wasn't required but established policies would be adhered to by the group. If the facilitator training is well attended, it may prove to be a fundraising activity for SBWN, which would be in order as we need the money. Any ideas of actions in the direction of fundraising will be appreciated and well-received.

The need for thorough communication was reflected in the disappointment of not having use of the regular meeting place on December 28. That decision was made by a few women who considered the lack of past holiday meeting attendance, the shortage of funds, and who had inadequate information about the group's current support needs. Women were seeking support from the group over the holiday, and an alternative gathering was arranged at the Encore. This brought up the need for an updated phone list so the group could achieve a more inclusive ability for alternative notice and information sharing. A liaison between the Newcomer's group and the CC representative for the Newcomer's group was suggested to ensure communication . It had been thought the facilitator and the CC representative were responsible for this communication, but further discussion of this issue may be necessary.

The distasteful concept of graduation from one group to another came up and the answer to that is obvious to me - no one knows my needs better that I do and one aspect of SBWN may or may not fulfill some or all of my needs at any one point in time. All entities of SBWN should be open to each of us based on our own judgment of our personal needs. To set the record 'straight' - no graduation is offered by SBWN. As bisexuals interested and involved in SBWN, we take advantage of the safe place to explore all aspects of our sexuality and to self-define that sexuality. Personal growth is inevitable and should not be compared to others' personal growth.

I was impressed Monday with the group's respect for the needs of the women attending the group for the first time. The second half of the meeting was dedicated to expression of support for these women and they were asked to come back to another meeting and to realize that this was an exception to the usual format. Perhaps the women of the Newcomer's group related more readily to the needs of these women because we've been in their place, perhaps more recently than others. We can also relate to women who fought and won our right to vote, to own and be responsible for our bodies and the women today who fight fear, hate and ignorance that perpetuates oppression of bisexuals from homophobia and heterophobia. I saw a lot of women standing up for themselves at this meeting and stating their desires. I find this very attractive and endearing, and only alarming in the case that respect of the common good and undecided voices are forgotten. I don't want to be undermined by polarization in the home I've found in SBWN.

The diversity of SBWN was well reflected at this Monday evening meeting. Who are we? What do we want to be? Given respect, we all want tolerance and inclusion. Each of us can discover and decide what that means and how we will make it work for us personally and/or politically, in our hearts and in our organizations. Us against them? Excuse me sister, SBWN isn't the enemy and neither am I. Bigotry is. Our own voluntary individual growth in consciousness will prove that bigotry has no place in any aspect of SBWN.▼

BREAKFAST IN BED: THE SURPRISE GIFT

by Lea Haravon

The down comforter was light against my clothed skin in the early December morning. I did not have to open my eyes to know that she was sleeping quietly beside me. Some mornings we would hold each other silently during those last moments before our busy days were to begin, other days we squeezed a few minutes of passion from those intervals between the snooze alarm's insistent call. This morning, I was looking forward to a few snuggles before she had to begin her Saturday of meetings and errands. I had finished my commitments for the semester and had a day to spend by myself, shopping for presents and strolling aimlessly in the cloudy December day.

She woke up in her usual way, by fumbling for my warm body with eyes closed. Her arm was heavy with sleep, and its weight across my ribs was enough to make me shift onto my side to better support it. I faced her and opened my eyes.

Her face looked clear and clean, like an Itlian white marble statue and her hair was pushed away from her face so that it rested on the pillow. I loved to look at her face, especially when she slept, or was just returning to me from sleep. I longed to feel her dark red lips against mine, or to see them travel across my chest and belly, but I knew that it would be both frustrating and unfair of me to try to persuade her to pleasure me this morning. We had been trying to get out of bed with enough time to have a relaxed breakfast lately, and although we had sacrificed a few cozy or passionate moments, we did enjoy calm mornings together. As she stirred gently, I decided that this morning I would let her get up without me. I would allow myself the pleasure of watching her get dressed and then enjoy a few more hours of delicious sleep while she sparred at the dojang. I loved to watch her dress almost as much as I loved to watch her undress. Her nightshirt lifts off to reveal more marble skin and inviting breasts, and her broad shoulders and back are strong and smooth. As she hides all that beauty under a turtleneck or a sweatshirt, I feel proud and pleased to know that I am the chosen, the lucky woman who has the privilege of knowing what treasures lie beneath those clothes.

We rested in our cozy hug until her alarm clock issued its first warning. Her heavy eyes opened and I watched the silvery blue of them travel to the clock as she silenced its cries, her arm then returning to me.

"What time do you have to be there?" I asked her quietly. We were still waking up, but I wanted to know how much time I still had to enjoy the sensation of her luscious body against mine. She took a deep breath in, and as the breath became a yawn, she rubbed her eyes and moved her body as if to crawl into the nape of my neck. I held her and stroked her fine hair from her scalp all the way to the ends which rested on the edge of the pillow.

"Lea," she said to me as I held her, "I've decided to give you one of your Christmas presents early this year."

"Oh?" I was not really thinking about presents at that moment, but more about the delightful feeling of warmth and love between us, and how I wished we had a few hours to enjoy each other's bodies this morning.

"Do you know what it is, the present I want to give you early?" I half hoped it was something romantic and half hoped for a pair of wool socks and a scarf.

"I don't," I said to the side of her head sleepily. "What time do you have to be at your workout?" We had let some time slide by us and I did not want her to be rushed or late.

She smiled as she extracted herself from the cradle of my neck and shoulder. A hint of mischief shone through the sleepiness in her eyes.

"The present is, I am not going to get up this morning until I have decided that I have thoroughly and completely satisfied your desires. What do you think of that?"

Her eyes traveled the length of my body as she propped herself up on her elbow and gently pushed me down so I was lying flat on my back. My body told me instantly what it thought of the idea, but my mind was not quite believing the pricelessness of this spontaneous gift. It seemed very out of character for her to stay in bed an extra hour or two when she had already decided to go somewhere, but I was, literally, in no position to ask her to analyze this sudden alteration of habitual patterns.

Sometimes, when I am very relaxed, my body can decide that it will become purely an enlarged flame of desire; my legs and arms melt away and my frame is merely there to support hot clitoris, wet vagina and engorged breasts. I wondered if this could be such a morning. All the ingredients were there: time, intimacy and a patient woman to whom I was exceptionally attracted and who clearly wanted my body to dance to the erotic melodies she would play.

The phone rings.

And another miracle; she lets it ring and ring. The sound is more music to my ears; she really does want to give this morning to me.

(To be continued next issue! You'll just have to wait....)

Calendar

Please note that topics can be tentative. Call the bi-phone at 783-7987 to check.
For men's events and BiNet events call the Seattle Bisexual Men's Union at 720-4506.

Wednesday February 3 Seattle Feminist Activists Raven Gildea and Joan Hill speak at North Seattle Community College 12 noon-1pm

Friday February 5 BiNetmeeting at Elizabeth's 7pm

Monday February 8 Newcomer's group meeting, 7:15 pm

Thursday February 11 Bi Phone answered Live, talk to a real live bisexual woman 7-9:30pm

Friday February 12-Sunday February 14 BiNet Regional meeting and Big Fun conference, Pilgrim Congregational Church, call the BiNet number for information and to register.

Friday February 14 Reception for out of town conference participants

Saturday February 13 Conference workshops all day, elections of regional delegates in afternoon, dinner and dance party Saturday evening.

Sunday February 14 Bisexual Visibility Day, Bi Kiss-In in front of Pilgrim Congregational Church, followed by mobile Bi-Outings

Sunday Februry 14, SBWN meeting 6pm, topic: Coming Out

Tuesday February 16 BiPhone answered Live 7-9:30pm

Sunday February 21 Facilitator's Training Workshop with Sandra Jo, 10 am to 3pm at Marcia's, also potluck brunch

Sunday February 21 SBMU meeting 7pm, personal support and check-in and potluck, SCCC portable B107

Monday Februry 22 SBWN Newcomer's group meeting, 7:15pm

Sunday Februry 28 SBWN Coordinating committee meeting at 6pm, followed by rap group meeting

Sunday February 28 SBMU bowling party at Imperial Lanes 2101 22nd Ave S. 7pm

Monday March 1 Deadline for submissions to April issue of North Bi Northwest

Sunday March 7 International Women's Day, SBWN will have a booth at the Mountaineer's Club; 2-5pm, call the Bi-phone to help out.

Monday March 8 SBWN Newcomer's gorup meeting, 7:15pm

Thursday March 11 BiPhone answered Live 7-9:30pm

Friday March 12 BiNet meeting at Lizabeth's, 7pm

Sunday March 14 SBWN meeting 6pm, topic: Menstruation and Menopause and how we feel about them

Sunday March 14 SBMU meeting 7pm, topic: Racism and Multiculturalism, SCCC portable B107

Tuesday March 16 BiPhone answered Live 7-9:30pm

Monday March 22 SBWN Newcomer's group meeting, 7:15pm

Sunday March 28 SBWN rap group meeting 6pm

Saturday March 27 and Sunday March 28 Yard Sale to raise money for Bi groups and for the March on Washington, call to make donations and to help out

Sunday March 28 Spring Fever Party! You must wear the scariest item you were unable to sell at the yard sale

Tuesday March 30 Newsletter stuffing party at Lizabeth's 6:30pm

Friday April 2 BiNet meeting at ben's, 7pm

Monday April 5 SBWN Newcomer's group meeting 7:15pm

Thursday April 8 BiPhone answered Live 7-9:30pm

Sunday April 11 SBWN meeting 6pm, topic to be announced

Monday April 19 SBWN Newcomer's group meeting, 7:15pm

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compiled by Peggy Walsh

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WHOSE CULTURE IS IT ANYWAY? ON RECLAIMING FAMOUS BISEXUALS /Amanda Udis-Kessler
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